United Nations S/2016/585

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 July 2016

Original: English

Letter dated 1 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Japan, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate on Tuesday, 19 July 2016, on the working methods of the Council under the agenda item "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)".

In order to help guide the debate, Japan has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Koro **Bessho**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

16-11354 (E) 080716

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 1 July 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the working methods of the Security Council under the agenda item "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)", to be held on 19 July 2016

I. Introduction

On 19 July 2006, the Security Council adopted the first note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) on the working methods of the Council after intensive work by the Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Japan, the Chair of the Informal Working Group for 2016, will convene on 19 July, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of this important note, an open debate on the working methods of the Council, under the agenda item "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)", as one of the highlights of its presidency of the Council for the month of July 2016.

II. Background and context

The Security Council is expected to meet two sometimes conflicting requirements: first, to make decisions that will ensure prompt and effective action to maintain international peace and security; and second, to gain the support of the wider United Nations membership for such decisions of the Council to be carried out. Enhancing transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness of the working methods of the Council is crucial to the effective functioning of the Council by meeting these requirements.

In all these areas, the Security Council has made steady progress during the past decade. In 2006, a note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) was issued as a compilation of the working methods of the Council, setting forth clearly the Council's working practices. Then in 2010, another note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507), containing 13 areas relating to Council practices, updated, further developed and expanded the previous note of 2006. These notes were both products of intensive work by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions chaired by Japan.

Since the note of 2010, there have been additional notes issued on the working methods of the Security Council. While these are important achievements, they remain in separate documents and in a random order. This is not user-friendly, and may be contributing to implementation problems in some cases. There may also be room for further improvement.

In the statement by the President of the Security Council of 30 October 2015 (S/PRST/2015/19) on behalf of the Security Council, the Council requested the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions "to continue reviewing and updating relevant Notes by the President of the Security

Council, in particular Note S/2010/507, including with a focus on implementation". In the coming months, in accordance with the statement by the President, the Informal Working Group intends to work towards a single comprehensive document in the form of an updated note 507 that would consolidate and streamline all decisions on working methods. An updated note 507 could also include some new improvements.

III. Objective of the debate

It is useful for the Security Council to periodically conduct a comprehensive review of the progress, in the light of the current practice and taking into account the voices from the wider United Nations membership. In the note by the President of the Security Council of 28 August 2013 (S/2013/515), the members of the Council expressed their commitment "to continuing to provide opportunities to hear the views of the broader membership on the working methods of the Council, including in any open debate on the implementation of the note by the President of 26 July 2010 (S/2010/507), and to welcoming the continued participation by the broader membership in such debates".

In keeping with this commitment, and building on the open debates organized annually by the Security Council in recent years, this open debate will provide an opportunity for the Council, with the participation of interested delegations from the wider membership, to look at the implementation of note 507 and other relevant notes to identify successful practices as well as possible shortcomings, and consider making necessary adjustments. Some adjustments can be made to improve the way the Council implements the notes, while others may be made to codify newly emerging customs and practices or to further improve the current working methods of the Council.

This open debate will be especially beneficial and timely for the Security Council as it will start discussions on an updated note 507 through the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. Delegations are thus invited to draw lessons from the past six years of developments in the working methods of the Council, and make practical suggestions in the key areas of transparency, efficiency and inclusiveness, as well as impact, so as to inform, support and guide the future work of the Informal Working Group. A useful summary of the open debate of 2015 under the Spanish presidency is available for reference in the letter dated 12 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/70/679-S/2016/35).

IV. Format

Open debates are aimed at giving the Security Council the benefit of contributions from both Council members and the wider membership. It is too often the case, however, that open debates end up becoming day-long meetings without much focus.

The note by the President of the Security Council of 12 December 2012 (S/2012/922), states: "All participants speaking in an open debate, including members of the Security Council, are encouraged to be succinct and focused in their

interventions, which, whenever possible, should not exceed ... time suggested by the President of the Security Council at the start of the debate. If necessary, the text of a more detailed statement may be circulated to Council members and participants." This open debate intends to implement this by the following means.

- In order to make the open debate action-oriented, all speakers are strongly urged to focus their interventions on up to three topics they consider most important to address in the Council's deliberations on an updated note 507. In doing so, speakers are also encouraged, whenever possible, to refer to the specific paragraphs of the relevant existing notes of the President of the Security Council. (For example, in the case of the methodologies of wrap-up sessions and informal briefing sessions, speakers may refer to paragraphs 14 and 15 of note S/2012/922 as well as to paragraph 2 (i) of note S/2013/515. In the case of the drafting of Council products and the penholdership arrangement, speakers may refer to paragraphs 42-45 of the annex to note S/2010/507 and to note S/2014/268. In the case of reporting intervals, speakers may refer to paragraph 12 of the annex to note S/2010/507.)
- All speakers (both Council members and non-Council members alike) are asked to kindly keep their interventions succinct and within 4 minutes.
- To this end, all speakers are urged to refrain from the usual introductory compliments.
- Speakers who wish to do so may circulate, if necessary, the text of a more detailed statement to Council members and participants, without making oral statements which exceed 4 minutes.
- Joint statements, including from members of the Security Council, are encouraged.
- Microphone lights will start blinking when there are 30 seconds left until the time that the speakers are asked to finish. When 30 seconds have passed after the time the speakers are asked to finish, the President will urge the speakers to kindly wrap up immediately by using the gavel as necessary. (As all speakers are expected to finish their interventions in 4 minutes, microphone lights will start blinking at 3 minutes and 30 seconds, and the President will notify the speakers at 4 minutes and 30 seconds.)

V. Outcome

No outcome document is expected immediately following the open debate itself. However, as in 2010, Japan, as the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, intends to follow up the discussions in the open debate, especially the specific practical suggestions made in the debate, in the deliberations of the Informal Working Group on an updated note 507, to be adopted in due course.